

1991. During his tenure, Bill George built Medtronic into a company that employs 25,000 people in 120 countries, with revenues of more than \$5 billion.

But Bill is more than a successful businessman. He is a policy visionary who believes in patient centered care, which is enabled by medical technology. I want to single out the Patient Summit he hosted in Washington, D.C. last year, which encouraged a dialogue between patients, policymakers and advocacy groups about the role patients can play in directing their own health care.

Under his leadership, the Medtronic Foundation has reached out to patient groups in unprecedented ways, giving \$12 million last year alone to non-profit organizations in communities worldwide.

As a fellow Minnesotan, I've watched Bill's personal efforts in the community with much admiration. His efforts as chair of the board of the United Way of Minneapolis and vice chair of the board of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, as well as his work on the boards of the American Red Cross and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, are just a few of the highlights.

Mr. Speaker, I highly commend Bill George for his visionary and innovative leadership. He has taken a great company and made it better with his strong commitment to bettering the lives of patients. Bill's integrity and leadership qualities have made him a great role model for many aspiring leaders, and he is a true inspiration to many.

Bill George will be sorely missed by Medtronic, but the Twin Cities community will continue to benefit from all that he does for so many. I applaud Bill for a stellar career at Medtronic, and I wish him and his wonderful wife, Penny, and their family continued success and happiness in future years.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN E. PETERSON

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 9, 2001

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 100, I put my voting card in and it did not register. Had it registered, I would have voted "Yea".

CONGRATULATING EISELEBEN
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH ON CELEBRATING THE
ONE HUNDRED FIFTIETH ANNI-
VERSARY

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 9, 2001

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor and pride that I stand before the House today to extend my congratulations to Eiselben Evangelical Lutheran Church as the congregation celebrates its 150th Anniversary.

Named after the town in Germany where Dr. Martin Luther, the founder of the Lutheran

Church was born, Eiselben Lutheran Church was formed in 1848 in what is now known as Scott City. Formally organized in 1951, the first congregation was comprised of just 19 members gathered together in a home. But although small in numbers, they were large in faith. 1848 was a meaningful year. It was that year the first baptism was performed in the church and it was that same year the first communion was celebrated on the Sunday following Easter.

Slowly the congregation grew, and steadily the numbers rose to a point where in 1855, the church was fortunate enough to welcome the arrival of its first permanent pastor. A short time later, a log building was erected as the first house of worship in 1867 and a second facility was added in 1897—a school building.

Other timely and memorable events followed, including the organization of what is now the Lutheran Youth Fellowship in 1893. The church construction was completed in 1913 and the Ladies Aid Society was organized that year as well. Finally, Sunday School, the education program for the youth in the church community, began in 1922.

The church has seen many changes during its colorful 150-year history. Twenty-five pastors have dedicated their time and energy to growing this spiritual community including the current Rev. Robert Azinger.

Mr. Speaker, on this very special occasion, I ask that all of my colleagues join me in congratulating Eisleben Lutheran Church on its 150th anniversary. May the blessings they have enjoyed thus far continue so that they might remain strong and solid for years to come.

ANTI-SEMITISM IN DAMASCUS

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 9, 2001

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, during the historic visit of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to Syria earlier this week, Syria's new president Bashar al-Assad, in a speech welcoming the Pope in Damascus, spewed forth the most vile and vicious anti-Semitism. He said that the Jews "tried to kill the principles of all religions with the same mentality in which they betrayed Jesus Christ and the same way they tried to betray and kill the Prophet Muhammad."

This venomous remark was in stark contrast to the theme that the Pope voiced during his visit to Syria—peace and understanding. This was reflected in his visit to the Great Omayyad Mosque in Damascus, the first visit by any Pope to a Moslem house of worship. His Holiness on that occasion called for a "new attitude of understanding and respect" between Muslims, Christians and Jews.

The Wall Street Journal yesterday editorially expressed the concern for the response from President Bashar Assad and others in Syria. "But instead of being met by reciprocal gestures, Sheik Kufaro, with Syrian President Bashar Assad, used the Pope's visit to showcase their own intolerance. The Sheik delivered a speech urging Christians and Muslims

to line up against 'Jews and Zionists.' Assad helpfully reminded the Pope of the role played by Jews in the death of Christ. And from Syria's state-controlled media came the line that Israelis were 'enemies of God and faith.'"

The Journal also noted that vicious anti-Semitism which the Pope's visit brought out in his hosts is certainly not limited to Syria alone. The editorial quoted an Arab school text: "'Perhaps Allah brought the Jews to our land so that their demise would be here,' reads a characteristic passage of a Palestinian textbook for children. In Egypt, popular columnist Ahmad Ragab recently wrote, 'Thanks to Hitler, blessed memory, who on behalf of the Palestinians, revenged in advance, against the most vile criminals on the face of this earth.' The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, a notorious anti-Semitic tract penned in czarist Russia, remains in wide circulation throughout the Middle East."

Mr. Speaker, how much at odds with the purpose and message of the Papal visit were the vile words of President Assad. He used the occasion of the Papal visit to throw gasoline on the flames of anti-Semitism at a time when this region of the world is most in need of soothing remarks and racial healing. I welcome the condemnation of the statements of President Bashar Assad that have appeared in the a large number of American newspapers.

Mr. Speaker, The Washington Post published an excellent editorial yesterday criticizing Bashar Assad's vicious anti-Semitic, outrageous and inflammatory statements. I ask that this editorial be placed in the RECORD, and I urge my colleagues to read it.

VILE WORDS

Editorial, The Washington Post, Tuesday,
May 8, 2001

SYRIAN PRESIDENT Bashar Assad on Saturday offered a vivid, if vile, demonstration of why he and his government are unworthy of respect or good relations with the United States or any other democratic country. Greeting Pope John Paul II in Damascus, Mr. Assad launched an attack on Jews that may rank as the most ignorant and crude speech delivered before the pope in his two decades of travel around the world. Comparing the suffering of the Palestinians to that of Jesus Christ, Mr. Assad said that the Jews "tried to kill the principles of all religions with the same mentality in which they betrayed Jesus Christ and the same way they tried to betray and kill the Prophet Muhammad." With that libel, the Syrian president stained both his country and the pope, who so far has failed to adequately respond. He also confirmed something about himself that has become increasingly clear during the months since he inherited the presidency from his father: This 35-year-old naif is headed in a dangerous direction.

John Paul's decision to visit Syria and to become the first pontiff to visit a mosque offered Mr. Assad a remarkable opportunity. The former ophthalmologist has been struggling to establish himself as a credible leader both in and outside of Syria, and could have drawn on the pope's enormous prestige by welcoming his latest attempt to reach out to another faith. But Mr. Assad seems to have little understanding of the world outside Damascus, or how he can productively relate to it. Since taking office, he has abandoned his father's uneven efforts to reach out to Israel and the West and instead taken a series of militant and provocative steps, ranging from

increased support for the Hezbollah militia in southern Lebanon to the illegal export of hundreds of millions of dollars of Iraqi oil through a Syrian pipeline. At an Arab conference in March he proposed the reinstitution of a boycott against Israel, saying the Israelis were "worse than the Nazis." The Arab leaders wisely ignored his proposal, while his rhetoric drew widespread condemnation.

Having evidently learned nothing from that episode, Mr. Assad sought Saturday to recruit the pope and the Catholic Church for his war against Jews. Vatican officials maintained that the pope did not have prior notice of Mr. Assad's medieval appeal, and the pontiff's own words implicitly rejected it. But the Vatican's response to Mr. Assad was shockingly blase, considering the effort John Paul has made to repudiate the church's own history of anti-Semitism. "We are guests of the president and he expressed his opinion," said longtime papal spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls. "I wouldn't call it strong; I would call it clear."

What is clear is that Mr. Assad converted a visit meant to symbolize tolerance and reconciliation into a display of obtuseness by the Vatican in the face of religious ignorance and hatred. During the past decade the United States engaged diplomatically with Mr. Assad's father, gaining his support in the Persian Gulf War and drawing him into the Middle East peace process. Despite the totalitarian nature of his regime and its sponsorship of terrorism, Hafez Assad seemed to understand that peace with Israel and engagement with the West offered the only way forward for his country. His son clearly does not—and should be treated accordingly.

TRIBUTE TO CAITLIN STEIGER
FOR HER EXEMPLARY VOLUNTEER SERVICE

HON. HAROLD E. FORD, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 9, 2001

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to and commend Caitlin Steiger for her exemplary service and commitment to her community. On May 7, 2001, Caitlin was named one of America's top ten teen volunteers in Prudential's Spirit of Community Awards Ceremony. She was recognized for her efforts to organize an annual 5K run, which benefits Hope House day care center in Memphis. Through her own initiative, Caitlin created this local service project to strengthen her community and provide much needed services to children suffering with AIDS.

Caitlin has successfully organized this event for the past two years and, during that time, raised over \$50,000 for this day care center that services children with AIDS or who have relatives with AIDS. She was selected to the top ten from over one hundred teenagers who were honored for their community achievements.

It is inspiring to see a young Tennessean give something of quality back to the Memphis community and to the entire state. While there is no doubt that Caitlin found this work rewarding, I am sure that those who have benefitted from her efforts are very grateful for her special contribution. I am very proud of Caitlin's efforts to create a better, stronger community.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

Caitlin is an outstanding young leader and is certain to continue to make a difference in the world around her. Her commitment to public service is an example for all ages of what it means to be a leader. I appreciate what she has done for all Tennesseans and am certain that this is just the beginning of many successes for this most impressive young woman. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring her today.

INTRODUCTION OF THE AIRLINE
CUSTOMER SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2001

HON. J.C. WATTS, JR.

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 9, 2001

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Airline Customer Service Improvement Act. This legislation is designed to address many of the underlying problems that have led to the recent public frustration with the air travel industry.

On June 17, 1999, the Air Transport Association, the association representing most of the major air carriers, announced that each of these carriers would develop voluntary customer service plans to address the problems the industry is facing. This came in response to several pieces of legislation that had been introduced in the 106th Congress to address this situation.

However, on February 13, 2001, the Department of Transportation Office of the Inspector General released its final report analyzing the progress made by the airlines under their voluntary "Customer Service Commitment." The Inspector General's report concluded that, although progress had been made, there were still significant shortfalls. The report further pointed out that the Service Commitments did nothing to address the underlying problem of delays and cancellations.

When a customer purchases an airline ticket, there are obligations such as arriving on time, staying seated on the plane during take-off and obeying rules and regulations set by airlines. But the contract should be mutual. The passenger needs assurances that the airline lives up to the other end of the bargain.

This legislation directs the Secretary of Transportation to establish a uniform check-in deadline and requires airlines to disclose that deadline on their ticket jackets. It states there must be notification that involuntarily bumped passengers must be offered compensation before any offers are made to volunteers. The bill also requires prompt notification and truthful explanation of any flight delays, cancellations or diversions.

The Airline Customer Service Improvement Act requires more detailed and accurate information on mishandled baggage, including the establishment of a luggage tracking system and a toll free telephone number passengers can call to check on the status of their delayed luggage. It also requires that passengers who do not check luggage not be counted when calculating the rate of mishandled luggage.

This bill codifies common sense and common courtesy. If someone's flight is canceled,

then that person should be called. Why should someone who owns an airline ticket be forced to pack up the car and drive to the airport on a wild goose chase?

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is urgently needed to address some of the underlying problems in the air travel industry as we move into the summer traveling season. I encourage my colleagues to take a look at this legislation and join me in co-sponsoring the Airline Customer Service Improvement Act.

IN HONOR OF OUR VETERANS

HON. CHRIS CANNON

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 9, 2001

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, on Memorial Day, we remember those brave men and women who have given the ultimate sacrifice for the freedom and world stability that we now enjoy. Let us use this day to remember our ancestors, our family members, our loved ones, and our friends who have given their last full measure of devotion to our country.

As part of the ongoing celebration, I rise today to honor the Lehi American Legion of Utah as well as the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The veteran memorial they have constructed in the Third District of Utah, which I represent, is a fitting and proper way to honor those who have served.

The Lehi American Post 19 and their 88 members have designed a memorial wall which includes over 400 names of veterans that are buried in the Lehi cemetery. This memorial stands not only as a tribute to the deceased, but as a tribute to the ideals that American soldiers still embrace and defend today.

Many of us celebrate Memorial Day with parades, social gatherings, and barbecues, but let us not forget the silent pain of the widows, widowers, and orphans of our fallen dead. Let us not forget what Memorial Day is really all about: honoring America's fallen heroes. The Lehi American Legion's memorial honors over 400 such heroic veterans who have served since World War I. Its unique presentation is deserving of special attention.

Mr. Speaker, Memorial Day is a very special day to honor our veterans and current service men and women who contribute to our national defense. The people of Utah are eternally grateful to them and to their families for making such great sacrifices on our behalf.

TRIBUTE TO THE MONTGOMERY-AUTAUGA-ELMORE MEDICAL ALLIANCE

HON. TERRY EVERETT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 9, 2001

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, I wish to pay tribute to an outstanding community service organization in my congressional district that is committed to enhancing the medical care of our residents through vital health education and awareness campaigns.